

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-16, 18-23, and 30-33 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 18, 30, 32 and 33 are independent.

Claims 30-33 have been added, claims 17 and 24-29 have been canceled, and claims 1 and 18 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references supplied with the Information Disclosure Statements filed October 19, 2005 and April 10, 2008, and for providing Applicants with initialed copies of the PTO-SB08 forms filed therewith.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5, 7, 9-14 and 18-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 01295660 (Kaneko et al.). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a stepper motor including a housing having a first end, a second end and an outer surface extending between the ends. A stopper at the second end engages the outer surface of the housing. Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a stepper motor including a stopper coupled to the outer surface of the guide portion in the radial direction of the rotor to support the second supporting unit.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 18 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Kaneko et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that Kaneko et al. discloses an essentially flat end 30, best seen in Figure 10, having a central depression 30a and contacting the end of the housing, not the outer surface extending between the ends of the housing, as is now claimed in independent claim 1 or coupled to the outer surface of the guide portion in the radial direction of the rotor to support the second supporting unit, as is now recited in independent claim 18. The Examiner has stated that the housing 22 had a second end of reduced thickness 30a. The housing 22 has a constant diameter as portion 30a is part of the stopper 30. However, if portion 30a is considered part of a housing, there is no stopper, as is claimed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 18 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Kaneko et al., for the reasons explained above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

With regard to dependent claims 2-5, 7, 9-14 and 19-23, Applicants submit that claims 2-5, 7, 9-14 and 19-23 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claims 1 or 18 which are allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore claims 2-5, 7, 9-14 and 19-23 are allowable based on their dependence from claims 1 or 18. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 6 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. in view of Aoshima. Further, claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. in view of Ueno and claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kaneko et al. in view of Atsumi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Complete discussions of the Examiner's rejections are set forth in the Office Action, and are not being repeated here.

The secondary references applied by the Examiner do not cure the deficiencies of Kaneko et al. noted with respect to amended independent claims 1 and 18. Therefore, it is believed that claims 6, 8, 15 and 16 are allowable as they depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1, which is

believed to be allowable. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claims 30-33 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Independent claim 30 recites a combination of elements in a stepping motor including a stopper fitted on an opened end of a second end of a housing to support a supporting unit, the stopper having a top wall and a depending flange, the depending flange engaging a guide portion to retain the stopper. Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 30 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record. The stopper 30 of Kaneko et al. has no depending flange engaging a guide portion.

In addition, claim 31 recites a further limitation which is not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Independent claim 32 recites, *inter alia*, a second end having a reduced width compared with the first end, a second supporting unit supported on the second end of the housing, the second supporting unit guided in a radial direction of a rotor axis by the second end of the housing and the stopper coupled to the outer surface of the second end of the housing in the radial direction of the rotor axis. As mentioned above, the stepping motor of Kaneko cannot be said to have a second end of reduced width and a stopper on the second end nor a stopper coupled to the outer surface of the second end of the housing in the radial direction of the rotor axis.

Independent claim 33 recites, *inter alia*, a housing provided with a guide portion for guiding a second supporting unit in a radial direction of a rotor axis and a stopper coupled to the outer surface of the guide portion in the radial direction of the rotor axis to support the second supporting unit. The combination of elements recited in claim 33 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the disclosure of Kaneko et al.

Consideration and allowance of claims 30-33 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chris McDonald, Registration No. 41,533, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 5, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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